

# Autism

Created by: Jennifer Kaut M.Ed., BCBA

## DEFINITION

The "autism spectrum" describes a set of developmental delays and disorders which

- ☐ Impairs social interaction
- ☐ Impairs communication
- ☐ Has restricted repetitive and stereotyped patterns of behavior, interests and activities.

Impairments in fine, gross motor and sensory sensitivities are also common. Mental health co-morbidities are common: depression, anxiety, ADHD, obsessive compulsive disorder. It is such a broad diagnosis that it can include people with high IQ's to mental retardation. People with autism can be chatty or silent, affectionate or cold, methodical or disorganized. **If you have met one person on the spectrum....then you have met ONLY one person on the spectrum.**

## COMMON STRENGTHS

- ☐ Has the ability to see fine details
- ☐ Has an exceptional memory
- ☐ Is dependable & reliable
- ☐ Is very trainable & craves instruction
- ☐ Once he or she is trained, will not deviate from instruction
- ☐ Likes & is good at repetitive work
- ☐ Has the ability to visualize & "see" concepts in their head
- ☐ Has a dry, fun sense of humor
- ☐ Is straightforward & extremely honest

## COMMON STRUGGLES

- ☐ Struggles to see the "big picture"
- ☐ Can struggle to problem solve when given a situation they have not incurred before
- ☐ Can be very "black & white" - has a hard time "thinking outside of the box"
- ☐ Can struggle to communicate effectively
- ☐ Ability to process information is impaired and often slow
- ☐ Usually is not motivated by social pressure or social norms
- ☐ Change is difficult & anxiety provoking
- ☐ Transitions are stressful

## IMPLICATIONS for VR & Other Professionals:

- ☐ A new or stressful environment can evoke odd or challenging behavior
- ☐ Identify possible environmental triggers(bright lights, lots of people, smells, loud noises, etc)
- ☐ It is not always necessary to "fix" behaviors or deficits.
- ☐ Focus on creating an environment that avoids their common struggles
- ☐ Look for environments that need their strengths











## QUICK TIPS:

- ☐ Know that people on the spectrum require more time upfront...slow any process down
- ☐ Give them a tour of the new environment BEFORE a meeting
- ☐ At the first meeting - require no demands - just relationship build
- ☐ Email or mail questions that you will be asking of them BEFORE the meeting
- ☐ Email and texting are usually the preferred mode of communication versus face to face meetings or phone calls
- ☐ Use a simple written schedule to show them what they will be doing in a meeting and how long it will take
- ☐ Some parents experience the same symptoms as their child, they may be anxious & need to know what to expect.
- ☐ Be clear, concise and avoid lengthy explanations- provide visuals when possible



# Autism Employment Level of Comfort Scale



		Hate it!		I don't like it		It's ok		Pretty comfortable		Very comfortable	
<b>Social Situations</b> 											
When I go into a public setting		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
When I make eye contact		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
When I meet new people		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
When someone wants me to talk		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
When I don't know an answer to a question		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
When someone wants to make "small talk"(like talk about the weather or news.. things I am not really interested in.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Working with 2 or more people		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Working on a team for a project		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
When someone corrects me		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Feeling upset in public		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
When a co-worker or supervisor is upset		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>Environments</b> 											
Noisy places		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Bad smells or things I think smell		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Busy places (lots of people walking around)		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Brightly lit indoor places		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Quiet office with my own space		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Outdoors		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Transitioning from one place to another		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Required clothing or uniforms		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>Job Tasks</b> 											
When I don't understand a task		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
When I am given a task I don't like		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
When I am interrupted		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
When the way I do my work changes all of a sudden		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
When I am given my instructions in writing or through pictures		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
When I am just told my instructions verbally		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
When I am shown how to do a task and then I practice the task		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>Preferred Interests</b> 		Fill in the blanks									
 My favorite thing to <u>think</u> about is:											
 My favorite thing to <u>talk</u> about is:											
 My favorite thing to <u>learn</u> about is:											
 My favorite thing to <u>do</u> is:											
 My favorite <u>subject</u> in school is/was:											
 Don't make me do:											



# Autism Employment Assessment

## Purpose and usage of this assessment:

This assessment is designed to be completed on the job, on the job training, work adjustment training, volunteering, internships, situational assessments or any other work related experience. Assessment should yield areas that might create a barrier to employment for people with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Name of consumer: \_\_\_\_\_

Person filling out assessment: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of person filling out assessment: \_\_\_\_\_

Date assessment was completed: \_\_\_\_\_

Basic Social Skills	Not seen	A few times	Most of the time	Almost always
1. Able to at least make initial eye contact for 5 seconds				
2. Able to introduce him or herself				
3. Able to make social niceties- "like nice to meet you too"				
4. Will look up when spoken to				
5. Is able to wear/pick out appropriate clothing & have basic hygiene(no body odor, teeth brushed, body & hair brushed)				
Basic Communication				
6. Ability to make their needs known to others (either by verbal, picture or sign)				
7. Can initiate, sustain and end a conversation with little prompting				
8. When asked a question, will answer within at least 5 seconds				
9. Will expand on answers to questions beyond yes or no				
10. Can be redirected back to a conversation if they deviate				
Self Regulation & Emotional Intelligence				
11. When asked to, will wait to do a task				
12. Will accept "no" by a co-worker or supervisor				
13. When upset, he or she is able to calm themselves with little prompting				
14. Can tell when a co-worker or supervisor is upset				
15. Will respond appropriately when a co-worker or supervisor is upset				
Problem Solving & Flexibility				
16. May be upset at first, but will work through a frustrating task				
17. Will ask for direction when "stuck" versus shutting down				
18. Able to see more than one way to solve a problem				
19. Can make a decision when asked to by a co-worker or supervisor				
20. When annoyed with someone or something, can appropriately resolve it				
21. When his or her work is interrupted, will respond with a mild reaction				
22. When faced with a change in a work task, will adjust according				
23. When faced with a change in their personal life, is able to put it aside and focus on work				
Job Related Social & Communication Skills				
24. Will take feedback from supervisor and adjust accordingly				
25. Will complete a task when asked to do so				
26. Will ask for clarification when needed				

27. Will ask for new information to be given to him or her in their preferred way of learning (visually, auditory, modeling, experiencing.. etc)				
28. Will participate in a meeting (give input, speak when spoken to)				
29. Will engage in some aspect of "small talk" with co-workers and supervisor				
30. Can engage in professional boundaries by not disclosing very personal details				
31. Will complete tasks in a group setting				
32. Will allow co-workers or supervisors to comment on his or her work				
33. In a group setting, will allow others to express their thoughts & opinions				
34. Can agree to disagree when there is a difference of opinions				
35. Can compromise with co-workers and supervisor				
36. In a group setting, will take feedback and positively implement it				
<b>Level of Social Interaction &amp; Engagement</b>				
37. Prefers to complete tasks alone				
38. Will favorably interact with 1 to 2 co-workers				
39. Will favorably interact with more than 3 co-workers				
40. Prefers to work with the same people each day				
41. Will accept new co-workers or supervisors after a relatively short period				
42. Will respond favorably if a unknown person speaks to them (i.e. a customer)				
43. Will respond favorably to a question that he or she does not know the answer to				
<b>Work Belief System</b>				
44. Appears to want to please his or her supervisor				
45. Shows up, comes back from breaks & leaves on time.				
46. Will notify supervisor if late, sick or needs to make a change in work schedule				
47. Needs little prompting to complete their work				
48. Will put in sufficient hours in order to do quality work				
49. The completion of their work appears to be their reward				
50. Will stay afterhours if needed to complete a task				
<b>After completing the assessment, record the total of each color.</b>				

## How to use the results of this assessment

The results of this assessment should identify target areas of that are in need of improvement or accommodation in order to increase successful employment outcomes.

Areas indicated in RED, show a <u>significant</u> deficit and may require professional intervention.	Areas indicated in YELLOW, show a <u>moderate</u> deficit and may require professional intervention but could be taught by an experienced job coach.	Areas indicated in BLUE, show a <u>mild</u> deficit. Intervention could most likely be conducted by a VR counselor or experienced job coach.	Areas indicated in GREEN, show the consumers employment <u>strengths</u> and should be marketed to a potential employer.
<b>Targeted Skills</b> (start with 3 at a time) Number: ____ Number: ____ Number: ____  Start date: Mastered date:	<b>Targeted Skills</b> (start with 3 at a time) Number: ____ Number: ____ Number: ____  Start date: Mastered date:	<b>Targeted Skills</b> (start with 3 at a time) Number: ____ Number: ____ Number: ____  Start date: Mastered date:	<b>Strengths to be marketed:</b> Number: ____ Number: ____ Number: ____ Number: ____ Number: ____ Number: ____ Number: ____ Number: ____ Number: ____ Number: ____ Number: ____ Number: ____ Number: ____ Number: ____